

Message Text

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DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16267

E.O. 11652: LDS

TAGS: SREF, TH, VN, CB

SUZJ: CONDITIONS IN THAI REFUGEE CAMPS

REF: A. BANGKOK 11366; B. STATE 184935; C. BANGKOK 15704;

D. BANGKOK 15788

SUMMARY: CONDITIONS IN THAI REFUGEE CAMPS RANGE FROM FAIR TO VERY POOR. THE EMBASSY APPEALS ONCE AGAIN FOR AUTHORITY TO MOVE HIGH RISK CASES OUT OF THAILAND. END SUMMARY.

1. AN EMBASSY OFFICER, ACCOMPANIED BY VOLAG REPRESENTATIVE, VISITED THREE REFUGEE CAMPS IN KHLONG YAI (TRAT PROVINCE) AND KHLONG YAI (CHANTHABURI) AUGUST 3-4. WE HAVE REPORTED IN THE PAST ON CONDITIONS AT KHLONG YAI (TRAT) (REF A), WHICH MAY DESERVE THE DUZIOUS HONOR OF BEING THE WORST REFUGEE LOCATION IN THAILAND.

2. KHLONG YAI (TRAT) HOUSES A REFUGEE CAMP FOR VIET-NAHESE AND ONE FOR CAMBODIANS. THE AREA IS AN EXTREMELY RAINY ONE, AND THE REFUGEES LIVE PERMANENTLY IN MUD. THE VIETNAMESE, IN PARTICULAR, ARE IN BADLY OVER-CROWDED HOUSING, THE CAMBODIANS SOMEWHAT LESS. HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE POOR AND IN THE VIETNAMESE SHELTER ONE SEVERE CASE OF

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TUBERCULOSIS HAS ALREADY BEEN EVACUATED. SECURITY AT THE

CAMPS AT KHLONG YAI (TRAT) IS INADEQUATE. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, ONE CAMBODIAN REFUGEE HAS BEEN MURDERED, 2 VIETNAMESE WOUNDED, AND SEVERAL REFUGEES ROBBED. CONTRARY TO THE SITUATION EXISTING IN ALL OTHER CAMPS, REFUGEES IN KHLONG YAI (TRAT) ARE RECEIVING ABSOLUTELY NO FOOD FROM THE RTG. EXCEPT FOR THOSE WITH SOME MONEY, THEIR ONLY SOURCE OF FOOD IS DONATIONS PROVIDED BY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS VISITING THERE FROM TIME TO TIME. ONE CAMBODIAN, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD US HE HAS NOT EATEN FOR TWO DAYS. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT PROTEIN AND VITAMIN DEFICIENCY ARE BECOMING PROBLEMS. PER REF B, WE ARE CERTAIN THAT NO REFUGEES AT THAT LOCATION HAVE DEPARTED THE CAMPS FROM U-TAPAO TO THE U.S. USING THE DOCUMENTATION INTENDED FOR OTHERS. HOWEVER, THAI AUTHORITIES ARE DEFINITELY EXTORTING MONEY FROM BOTH CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE WHO WISH TO MAKE TRIPS OUTSIDE THE CAMPS.

3. CONDITIONS IN THE CAMBODIAN REFUGEE CAMP AT KHLONG YAI (CHANTHABURI) ARE FAIR, ALTHOUGH CROWDED. TWO NEW SUB-CAMPS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED NEARBY. ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF FOOD IS MINIMAL AND THERE IS NO QUESTION OF A BALANCED DIET, REFUGEES ASSURED US THAT THAI AUTHORITIES ARE PROVIDING THEM WITH ADEQUATE RICE. SECURITY IS SATISFACTORY. HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE POOR, WITH MALARIA FREQUENT. THERE IS MINIMAL MEDICAL TREATMENT PROVIDED AT A NEARBY HEALTH FACILITY AND SERIOUS CASES OF ILLNESS ARE BEING SENT TO THE CHANTHABURI PROVINCE CAPITAL.

4. A IAF TEAM WHICH VISITED THAILAND LAST WEEK DESCRIBED THE CONDITIONS IN THE CAMP AT ARANYAPRATHET (REF C). THAT CAMP CONTINUES TO RECEIVE NEW REFUGEES IN ADDITION, THAI AUTHORITIES HAVE BEGUN TO SEND REFUGEES ILLEGALLY IN BANGKOK TO VARIOUS CAMPS. (ALL REFUGEES WERE ORDERED BY THE RTG TO REGISTER BEFORE AUGUST 3 DEADLINE OR RISK BEING ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY INTO THAILAND.) ON 5 AUGUST, 39 CAMBODIAN REFUGEES WERE ADDED TO THE CAMP POPULATION AT ARANYAPRATHET.

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5. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE UNHCR IS PROVIDING NO DIRECT ASSISTANCE IN ANY OF THE CAMPS, EXCEPT FOR THE REGISTRATION OF REFUGEES.

6. AS PART OF ITS CONTINUING SERIES OF MEETINGS IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN IMPROVEMENT IN CAMP CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THAILAND, THE EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH BOTH THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND UNHCR REPS ON

AUGUST 6. WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THERE WILL BE
RAPID IMPRVEMENT IN THE THAI CAMPS. FOR THIS
REASON, THE EMBASSY IS ACCELERATING THE PACE OF MEOVEMENT
FROM THE CAMPS TO U-TAPAO AND THE U.S. FOR
THOSE REFUGEES WHO MEET EXISTING CRITERIA AND HAVE RECEIVED
VISA FALCON APPROVALS. WE ARE MOVING APPROXIMATELY
130 VIETNAMESE AND 40 CAMBODIANS FROM THE KHLONG YAI
(TRAT) CAMPS AUGUST 8. THE FRENCH, AS REPORTED IN REF D,
ARE ALSO BEGINNING TO MOVE LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES TO
FRANCE. WE URGENTLY NEED AUTHTRITY FROM WASHINGTON TO
BEGIN SENDING "HIGH RISK" CASES FROM THE CAMPS.
WHITEHOUSE

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